Making Peace with Modernity – A Study of the Schism within the Muslim Intelligentsia

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Abstract

The modernist impact on Muslim societies is attributable both to an indigenous process of reformation based on internal dynamics and as a direct outcome of the infiltration of Western ideas during the colonial period of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Muslim response to the cultural and intellectual hegemony of the West was manifested in diverse ways ranging from complete rejection of Western ideas by religious scholars to their complete acceptance. There were calls for renewal and reform of Muslim societies in response to this new and emerging challenge. Various movements were initiated to counter this new challenge which was perceived as a threat as well. However, the major response was the rise of Islamic modernist movement which led to stimulating intellectual discourses to reform Muslim societies. In contrast to eighteenth century revivalist movements, Islamic modernism wished to reformulate its Islamic heritage in response to the political and scientific challenges posed by the West. It provided an Islamic justification for accepting modern ideas and institutions, whether scientific, technological or political. These developments generated a new worldview, which sought expression in hostility to imperialism and love for nationalism, and also produced an urge to modify Islamic tradition in a manner that it could effectively operate in the newly emergent areas of public policy. Islamic Modernism presented a variety of thought from being apologetic to strong critiques of Western culture and values also included strong criticism of fellow Muslim scholars for not understanding the élan of the Qur'an and also for not undertaking ijtihad. Almost all modernists were unanimous in their calls for conducting Ijtihad. Another important element of the modernist response was the emergence of Muslim feminist critics who were skeptical of patriarchal exegesis of Qur'an and Hadith. The rejection of these modernist ideas can be traced in the writings of influential fundamentalists like Syed Qutb. This paper aims to present a critical analysis of the Muslim response to Modernity while focusing on different aspects of the modernist discourse.

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No other term has been as widely debated and discussed in the vocabulary of liberation and development relating to the third world and more particularly Muslim societies as modernity and modernization. Although the beginning of the postmodern age is heralded, but still modernity remains a puzzle for policy makers, masses and scholars in the Muslim world, and is defined in different contexts and in different domains of knowledge. Some identify modernization with Westernization. Others consider it a moment for a sociological change in society and weeding out institutions which have lost social value.[1] It is also interpreted as some kind of internal revolution that challenges traditional customs and values and compels people to emancipate themselves from traditional bonds and beliefs. However, from whatever angle modernity is evaluated and judged, one thing is certain, that it entails considerable fermentation and change in social relations, economic philosophy, political structures and religious beliefs.[2]

Modernity, the epoch of change that originated in the West, bespeaks of transformation in outlook and ideas. Modernity in its literal sense is the condition or quality of being modern,[3] signifies to certain historical developments and transitions that took place in the West from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance and Reformation, and then culminated in the Industrial and French Revolutions. Modernity brought cultural, religious and intellectual transformations and changed the premises and spirit of human norms in an exceptional way not only at the sociological level but also renewed the theories and thought processes of scientists and philosophers during the Enlightenment Age. Therefore, the experience of Modernity was called "Great Western Transmutation (G.W.T)"[4] in the West. It made its way in the Muslim world somewhat later for which there are different arguments but most of the theorists agree that the powerful impact of modernity wasn't experienced until the colonization of the Muslim world by European powers.

Though the decay and internal decline of Muslim societies was already acknowledged by Muslim rulers and many reform programs were initiated by them, still the complete infiltration of Western ideas in Muslim societies occurred during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the West colonized Muslim lands one by one. This hegemonic project was not only limited to territorial acquisition only; people of the colonized lands were coerced to lead their lives according to European ways and serve the imperial homeland. Europe not only invaded Muslim lands with its military and bureaucracy but also brought its Christian missionaries. "The colonial powers by force led the inhabitants Muslim societies to modernize in the same way as were their societies but at far rapid speed. The modernization process which took the West three centuries to complete was supposed to achieve in three decades in colonial Muslim lands."[5]

Muslim Intellectual Responses to Modernity:

In response to this cultural hegemony and domination of European colonial powers, Muslims responded in diverse ways ranging from complete rejection of Western ideas to complete acceptance and these responses differed from one place to another. Generally these responses can be summarized in four categories, i.e., rejection, acceptance, reformism and Islamic Modernism.

For many religious leaders and traditional '*ulamas*', the best way out of this European colonialism was refusal to deal with their colonial masters, shun their company, schools and institutions. Any form of cooperation was regarded as submission to the enemy. Modern European education was condemned as alien and a threat to religious belief.[6] Their approach is sometimes labeled as the *Ashab al-Kahaf* in Qur'ānic terms.[7]

The second major response was that of complete acceptance of Western ideas on the assumption that progress could only be possible by Westernization and secularization of societies. This was advocated by the elite class which emerged after being educated in Europe or in modern educational institutes established as a part of the *Tanzimat* reform program in the Ottoman Empire to modernize their lands. This new class of intellectuals, bureaucrats, lawyers and politicians praised the West for its scientific and technological process, and stressed on adopting Western values and culture to excel among nations of the world. The emergence of the modern Westernized elite minority also eroded the traditional bases of power and authority of religious leaders, as this minority assumed the positions of importance in government, education, and law - positions which had always been the prerogative of the *ulama*.[8] The empowerment of this new elite led to westernization of Muslim societies.

Another group called for renewal and reform of Muslim societies. Although this reform has been a continuous process throughout the history of Islam but its importance in the modern age was doubled. The individuals who took upon themselves the harder task of reforming Muslim societies contributed to the intellectual landscape. They added new strength to Islamic societies that were confronting a totally different challenge in the form of European imperialism. Yet they varied in their projects because of their different religious backgrounds and local environments. Shah Wali Ullah (1703-1762), Abdul Aziz Dihalwi in India[9], Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab in Saudi Arabia (1703- 1792),[10] Haji Shariat Allah of Fraizi Movement in Bengal (1764-1840),[11] Sayyed Muhammad ibn Ali al Sanusi (1787-1859) of Sanusi Movement,[12] Said Norsi (1878-1960) of Norsi Movement, Muhammad Ahmad ibn Abdullah (1844-1885) of Mahdi Movement in Sudan[13] (1848-1885) ,and Fulani in Nigeria (1754-1817) are examples of this kind of response which posited on the reformation of Muslim societies on religious lines and tried to eradicate the innovations (*bida'a*) from Muslim societies. These reformers and their reform movements are also identified with Islamic modernism in some cases as the reform movement associated with the Egyptian jurist and religious scholar Muhammad Abduh.[14]

The fourth major response was the rise of the Islamic modernist movement or Islamic Modernism. Islamic Modernism was a movement on the intellectual plane which produced discourses to reform Muslim societies. Although Islam had always moved through cycles of renewal and reform, what distinguishes the modernist movement of late nineteenth century from earlier attempts at Islamic "purification" was its profound engagement with the external threat posed by the West.[15] Islamic Modernism was an intellectual activity that was engendered by modern education,

modern press, and Western political philosophy. These developments generated a new worldview, which also sought expression in hostility to imperialism and love for nationalism and also produced an urge to modify Islamic tradition in a manner that it could effectively operate into the newly emergent areas of public policy. Modernists accepted the concepts of Western civilization such as scientific progress, freedom and liberty, but at the same time they were sincerely attached to the belief system of Islam, which was deep rooted and gave them a powerful cultural identity. [16]

Jamal ud din Afghani[17] (1838- 1897), Muhammad Abduh[18] (1849-1905) and Rashid Rida[19] (1865-1935) in Egypt, Muhammad Shukri Al Alusi (1857-1973) in Baghdad, Allal al-Fasi[20] (1910-1974) in Morocco, Abdul Aziz al Thalabi (1875-1944) and Khair ud Din Tunisi (1822-1890) in Tunisia. [21] Sayyed Ahmad Khan [22] (1817-1898) and Sayyed Amir Ali [23] (1849-1909) in Indian Sub-Continent, made a case for the compatibility of Islam with modern science and the best of Western thought. "They preached the need and acceptability of a selective synthesis of Islam and modern Western thought; condemned unquestioned reverence and imitation of the past; reasserted their right to reinterpret (*ijtihad*) Islam in light of modern conditions; and sought to provide an Islamically based rationale for educational, legal, and social reform to revitalize a dormant Muslim community."[24] In contrast to eighteenth century revivalist movements, Islamic Modernism did not seek to restore a spotless past but instead wished to reformulate its Islamic heritage in response to the political and scientific challenge of the West. It provided an Islamic justification for accepting modern ideas and institutions, whether scientific, technological or political (constitutionalism and representative government).[25]

Islamic Modernism – From Early Years to Contemporary Approaches:
There was considerable variety of thought in the ranks of Islamic Modernists. Among them were strong critics of European colonialists and Western culture who opposed Muslim scholars who compromised with the colonial masters and adopted Western ideologies.[26] For some of them the causes of Muslim decline were in European domination and for others, lack of progress in science and technology made Muslims fall behind amongst the nations of the world. Some of them tried to defend Islam to prove the compatibility of Islam and Qur'an with technology and scientific methods. But they all were of the view that Muslim societies need a major reformation. [27] They challenged the retrogressive interpretations of Islam by traditional '*Ulama*' and called for major reformation in Islam.

Early modernists can be identified with *Mu'tazila* who werepure rationalists and eclectic in their interpretations.[28] At intellectual level they wanted to reconcile Islamic beliefs with Newtonian Physics, the dominant paradigm of the age. At a social level, they were willing for a complete reformation of Muslim societies along the lines of European society. They idealized the social organization of Western societies and soon labeled all those customs of Muslim society against the true teachings of Islam which were not in vogue in Europe. Among earlier modernists Sir Sayyed and Muhammad Abduh advocated the dominance of natural laws and denied

miracles. Sir Sayyed in his quest for reconciling "science" and "Qur'ān", went so far that he argued that science is the "work of God" and the Qur'ān is the "word of God."[29] If there seems any contradiction between the two, that is only superficial. As a matter of principle, there can be no contradiction between the two. In his own words,

"In our time…there is a dire need for a new *Ilm al-Kalam*, in which either we prove that the fundamental propositions of the modern sciences are false or suspect, or else we prove that Islamic thought is compatible with them [e.g. modern sciences]." [30]

Sir Sayyed wrote a commentary of the Qur'ān [31] that symbolized his attempts to produce a theology in which the teachings of Islam are in accordance with science. In case of apparent incompatibility with science, he gave precedence to scientific truth. This methodology led Sir Sayyed to deny the miracles, supernatural beings, and other worldly space.[32] He defended Islam in a such a way that it came out as a collection of negative attributes which does not allow the oppression of women, does not allow slavery and most importantly, does not oppose modern science. "To prove this nature of Islam, he derived all his arguments from the traditional orthodox literature."[33]

Muhammad Abduh also found no inaptness between reason and revelation and argued that since the word of God had not put any restriction on the study of physical science, it would be wrong to argue that religion was against science. In his opinion, any statement in the Qur'ān had to conform to reason.[34] He tried to find clues to Darwin's Theory of Evolution in the Qur'ānic verse, "Had God not repelled some of the people by means of others, the earth would have been corrupted."[35] So in other words, the scientific concept of the struggle for survival has been already mentioned in the Qur'ān. Likewise, Sir Sayyed denied any place of miracles in Islam.[36]

Apologetic Rationalists or Apologists?

A number of early modern modernists were apologetic in their approach towards Islam. This apologetic response continued from awareness of the decline of Muslim civilization in relation to the West. "It attempted to provide a justification for faithfulness to Islam despite its "apparent" inadequacy in the arena of nations. The defense rested on belief in the eternal validity of Islam for all time and its relevance for the West." [37] Apologetics tried to answer the challenge of the West by bending over backwards to show in one way or another that "this or that element of Islam corresponds to just what is fashionable in the West today while other elements for which there could not be found a Western equivalent by even the greatest stretch of the imagination, have simply or even extraneous later enlargements."[38]

Arab apologetics argued that Western science is borrowed from the Arabs. This was expression of the thesis that Islam as a religion, far from being in conflict with science, encourages and nourishes it. Although the argument was true but the focus was on Science being Arab rather than on the role of science in society. [39] Most of the literature of apologetic modernism bore testimony to the need in which

men today are struggling: need for leadership, need for a way of life and attitude to Islam that can be embraced. "These kinds of writings hardly recognized that need in all its profundity, nor began to grasp how vast a transformation was required in the forms and paraphernalia of religion if it is to cross effectively the appalling chasm that separated modern man from it today."[40] On the religious plane, the apologetics left aside the fundamental questions and concentrated, in the main, on two subjects: the perfection of the Qur'ān and the personality of Muhammad (*SAW*). Both of these were old and familiar themes in Islam, and modern writers thus elaborated upon an extensive literature which went back to the early centuries.[41]

Sayyed Amir Ali was a passionate admirer of Sir Sayyed's thoughts and he wrote "*The Spirit of Islam*"[42] which represented the culmination of Indian Muslim apologetic approach. He acknowledged all the social, moral and political democratic values of the modern West and identified them with Islam; he recognized all the individual virtues of a modern leader of a progressive society and attributed them to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. According to his approach, early Islamic quasi-democracy is compared with Western despotism, later Islamic scientific and cultural flowering with the narrow mindedness of Christianity and so on. But the "stark fact remained that all this was achieved through adopting in toto modern Western standards."[43] His aggressive anti Western critique was attitudinally opposed to the Westernizing he recommended to the Muslims; his pride in past history made it difficult for the Muslims to appraise that history justly and therefore to face the present realistically. Of all theses motives, the most immediately decisive was the apologetic one.[44] He employed original apologetic arguments that became a major part of the Muslim discourses in 20th century as it contained all arguments in favor of Islam.[45]

The attempts of Modernist apologetics were primarily aimed at restoring faith in Islam among doubting Muslims by demonstrating the supreme excellence of their religion. Secondly, they directed their endeavors in persuading the "old fashioned" to leave social conservatism as they were sinning against the light according to these apologetics.[46] But in doing so they evaded the whole challenge of the West, which threatened the heart of Islam, which no attempts to placate the enemy can avert. It was like making peace with the threat and pretending it to be its friend instead of discernment. [47]

Primacy of Qur'an and *Sunnah*- Re-adjustment of Fiqh:

All the contemporary and early modernists raised the slogan of return to the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*. Beyond the emphasis on the primacy of Qur'ān and *Sunnah,* they also posed forceful challenge to Islamic law and *fiqh*. The main theological question posed by its thinkers "revolved around the question of the validity of knowledge derived from the Qur'ān, Hadith, the consensus of the theologian (*ijma*), and juristic reasoning by analogy (*qiyas*). To answer this question, they tried to "interpret the first two sources and transform the last two in order to formulate a reformist project in the light of prevalent standards of scientific rationality and modern social theory."[48]

With their contempt of fellow traditionalists' indifference to the changing reality, and their backing the idea of progress, these reformists began to draw a dividing line between the *nass* and accumulation output of *fiqh*. The *nass* is unchangeable because it is divine while the second can be changed, modified and adjusted as it is the product of human intellect. Therefore, they strongly criticized the blind adherence of *ulama* to the juristic opinions developed hundreds of years ago and called for *ijtihad* on every possible level of the *sharia'a*.[49] In other words, the whole modernist thought[50] is based on the concept of *ijtihad*.[51] They strongly criticized closing of gates of *ijtihad* and stressed on the importance of doing *Ijtihad* in every field and sphere of life. For this practice of conducting *ijtihad* in every matter, they modified the traditional definition of *Ijtihad* to interpret the Qur'ān and *Sunna* according to their wishes.

"…the effort to understand to meaning of a relevant text o precedent in the past, containing a rule, and to alter that rule by extending or restricting or otherwise modifying it in such a manner that a new situation can be subsumed it by a new solution."[52]

This definition is in deep contrast to the established definition of *ijtihad* which is limited to the "reinterpretation" of existing embargo contained in two primary resources in order to derive legal rulings regarding novel situations. According to the opinions of jurists and instructions in *Sunnah*, *Ijtihad* is only allowed when there are no clear injunctions in the sources of Qur'ān and *Sunna* with relation to any new situation. But almost all modernists conceived *ijtihad* as "a license to engage in wholesale enterprise to alter existing rules found in "…a relevant text" or "precedent in the past." [53] "They have replaced the rule by "…extending or restricting or modifying" the existing rule in order that the "new situation can be subsumed under it."[54] For the whole lot of modernists, *ijtihad* is usual practice to re-interpret the injunctions contained in the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* according to their wishes. This new definition of *ijtihad* is common on which all modernists agree. However, they differ in their methodologies and courses in reaching this point.[55]

Through this practice of *ijtihad* they stressed to reformulate the *Sharia* laws. Sheikh *Khallaf* of al-Azhar once remarked, "the goal of the law is only the welfare of men, and wheresoever's lies the welfare of men, there is the law of God.[56]" Rifah al Badāwi Tahtāwi during the first half of the nineteenth century had recommended that Islamic law must be changed to accommodate new social circumstances. He recommended that Muslim jurists instead of following a particular school of Islamic jurisprudence must practice *takhayyur*, which allowed a Muslim to seek remedy against any legal wrong from rules outside his own school of law.[57] According to Asaf Ali Fayzee, the entire legal framework of Islam needs very critical reevaluation. "If the complete fabric of the *sharia* is examined in this critical manner, it is obvious that in addition to orthodox and stable pattern of religion, a new "Protestant" Islam will be born in conformity with conditions of life in the twentieth century, cutting away the dead wood of the past and looking hopefully at the future. We need not

bother about nomenclature but if some name has to be given it to let us call it, "Liberal Islam."[58]

In other words Fayzee demanded that Islam must be emancipated from its dogmatic and hidebound juristic wrap. For him, every Muslim has the right to interpret divine law disregard of his ability. He believes that freedom of thought is the key to dynamic and progressive outlook and unless this outlook is developed, he sees no solution to the intellectual and moral turbulence that has engulfed the Muslim world. It is necessary to add that true Islam cannot thrive without freedom of thought in every single doctrine, in every single dogma. "Just as Luther broke faun (Roman deity) the barriers of Christianity and asserted the right of individual interpretation and progressive Jewry has sought to bring a reformed Judaism to the Jews, so also Liberal Islam must be recognized and given its place by the orthodox."[59]

Interpretation of Qur'an – Need of New Methodology:

Almost all modernists' discourses highlighted the decline of Muslim *Ummah* and sought the reasons of this decline. Later modernists differed from the earlier modernists in a way that they strongly criticized the apologetic attitude and tried to formulate strategy plans for the progress of Muslim *Ummah*. For example, Fazlur Rahman (1919-1988) complied with Muslim modernists in viewing the Muslim society in the process of decline. But he identified flawed intellectual legacy as the sole cause of this downfall. For him, selective adoption of Islamic practices or Western ideologies/institutions cannot lead to revival of Islamic societies. He criticized the stagnation created in Muslim societies due to the closing of the gates of *Ijtihad*. In his opinion, this blind imitation based on precedence and consensus created a new hierarchy of traditional 'ulamas' who occupied the position of interpreting and elaborating the Qur'ān and due to their attitude, the Muslim masses stopped turning to the Qur'ān for guidance. "Consequently, the Qur'ān became just a holy book to be praised for its eloquent style and inimitable grammatical aspects."[60] And at this point a gulf developed between the Muslims and the spirit of the Qur'ān which he nominated as *élan* of the Qur'ān.[61] To remove this gulf, he differentiated between historical Islam" and "normative Islam."[62] He stated that the phenomenon of Qur'ānic revelation unfolded "…in, although not merely for, a given historical context". Muslims must identify the compulsory feature in the revelation that is meant not only for the specific context in which it was revealed but is intended by Allah to "… outflow through and beyond that given context of history."[63] This would require a comprehensive study of the Qur'ān to ascertain principles and objectives. Through this comprehensive study, we would be able to recapture the *élan* of the Qur'ān. "Thereafter the *Asbab al-Nuzul* (the historical circumstances surrounding a specific revelation) should be used to examine specific pronouncements, to ensure that the pronouncement is in keeping with the *élan* of the Qur'ān. This will allow for the resurrection of the original thrust of Islamic message, free from the accumulated debris of tradition, precedent, and culture of the past millennium."[64] In this way he made clear distinction between normative and contextual verses of the Qur'ān.

Dr. Basit Bilal Koshul after analyzing the methodology of Fazlur Rahman, comments,

"The implications of Fazlur Rahman's proposed methodology are clear----- the specific legal injunctions in the Qur'ān that do not conform with the *élan* of the Qur'ān were meant only for the historical period in which the Qur'ān was revealed but are no longer binding in the modern setting.[65]This principle of negating the validity of specific Qur'ānic injunction under the pretext of giving precedence to the *élan* of the Qur'ān allows virtually unlimited freedom to do away with any specific Qur'ānic injunction. The relationship between this freedom and making Islamic thought conform to modern thought becomes clear as well." [66]

Islamic Feminism – Re-reading the Qur'an from a Woman's Perspective:

Contemporary Islamic Feminist Movements also derived their arguments from the divine text by interpreting on textual context basis. Muslim feminists suggest the reinterpretation of Qur'ān from the viewpoint of women as they are strongly convinced that contemporary legal norms and practices are entirely based on patriarchal and masculine interpretation of the Qur'ān. These Islamic feminists argue to re-address gender inequality in the Islamic legal norms and to represent authentic Islam. The famous names in the context are of Nazira Zeinud Din[67] and Amina Wadud.[68] Amina Wadud a converted Muslim followed the footsteps of Fazlur Rahman.[69]

Before interpreting the Qur'ān, she classifies the interpreting methodologies; "traditional, reactive, and holistic."[70] In her opinion, the traditional method of interpretation moves in a linear manner from one verse to the second and does not take into account the structure and coherence of the Qur'ān. This insufficient analysis results in disadvantage to women. The reactive method is adopted by ideologically motivated writers as a reaction to the position of women in poor Islamic societies.

The last method is the holistic method, which is based on the contextualized analysis of the Qur'ānic verses. She supports this method and "suggest the analysis of each verse of Qur'ān, (1) in its context, (2) in the context of discussions on the similar topics in the Qur'ān (3) in the light of similar language and syntactical structures used elsewhere in the Qur'ān (4) in the light of overriding Qur'ānic principles, and (5) within the context of the Qur'ānic *Weltanschaung* (world view)."[71] According to her, interpretation of verses related to the status of women will result in women's equality.[72] Through adopting this holistic way of interpretation of Qur'ān, the verses will be analyzed and understood in historical and social contexts. The result would be a proper understanding of the Qur'ānic concept of gender equality.

Muslim feminists also argue that because of isolating the verses from their historical and social contexts, women's position is misunderstood and misinterpreted. This misinterpretation of Qur'ānic verses has "fostered the theory of women's physical and intellectual inferiority, resulting in women's legal and social subordination."[73] For Dr Riffat Hassan, it is the trap into which the conservative Islamic scholars fell: "[t]hey have taken Qur'ānic verses out of context and read

them literally, ignoring the fact that the Qur'ān often uses symbolic language to portray deep truths."[74]

Instead of interpreting the Qur'ānic *suras* verse by verse, the atomistic method adopted by traditional interpreter, modern intellectuals have interpreted the *sura* (chapter) of Qur'ān as unity. They criticized the traditional exegesis to give an impression as Qur'ān is disjointed. In this way, they focused attention on the message of the whole *sura* (chapter), so they took the verses in the contextual text sometimes rejecting the *asbab un nuzul* in favor of context based interpretation of the Qur'ān. Hameed ud Din Farahi,[75] Amin Ahsan Islahi,[76] Javed Ahmad Ghamdi[77] adopted this way of exegesis of divine text. According to them, every *sura* has a theme (which they nominated as *"amud")* and all of the verses of a *sura* are integrally linked to its theme (*amud)* and reveal their full importance only when that theme is discovered and its centrality in the *sura* is recognized. In law, it would be a logical entailment of the *sura* as a unity view to assign, for purposes of interpretations, decisive importance to context. Two Egyptian scholars, Mahmud Shaltut and Abu Zahra made a contextualized study of the Qur'ānic verses pertaining to war and peace and came to the conclusion that, from the Qur'ānic perspective, the starting point in international law is peace and not war, and that Qur'ān permits fighting only to ward off aggression or to put an end to oppression.[78]

Some of the modernists interpreted the Qur'ān on literal basis and denied the Prophetic Traditions (Hadith) on the whole by labeling the whole heritage as doubtful in authenticity. The most quoted example in this context is that of Ahmad Perwaiz who in his letters "*Salim ke Naam*"[79] (for Salim) published in the form of three volume book, discussed different problems with his son "Salim", and every time while confronting problems, explained them with the wordings of the Qur'ān. He accepted Qur'ān as the only authoritative and rejected *Hadith* entirely.[80] His antipathy towards *Hadith* was summed by Sheila McDonough in these words,

"The collections of Hadith were made by individuals a long time after the death of the prophet. But surely, Pervaiz says, the Prophet would never have left such an important part of religion to be looked after in such a haphazard way. Hadith, he says was not a part of religion as the prophet has understood it. The Qur'ān was authoritatively laid down so that no one letter could be altered. But *Hadith* by contrast does not even exist in any authoritative edition."[81]

Islamic Modernism and Anti-Colonial Struggle:

The presence of colonial powers in almost every Muslim land let Islamic modernism play its role in the rise of nationalism in Muslim societies. Colonialists provided disorder for the novel sense of national identity that grew to influence all other aspects of modern Islamic experience. Modernists who grew in the imperial environment on one hand promoted hatred for Western imperialists, and on the other hand, highlighted the cultural heritage of their respective lands and stressed the need of independent homelands. Islamic modernism not only reawakened Muslims to a sense of past power and glory but also produced interpretations of Islamic teachings based on modern ideologies. They distinguished between adopting modern Western ideologies and rejected Western hegemony and imperialism.

Islam played an important role in the development of anti colonial independence movements and modern nationalism. It proved a factor to varying degrees in the development of local and regional nationalism: Arab, Egyptian, Algerian, Tunisian, Moroccan, Iranian, Pakistani, Malaysian, and Indonesian. However, if religion was one factor, it was far from the only one. The appeal to Islam varied regionally, conditioned by local contexts. In some areas, Islam was a prominent factor while in others it was subordinated to secular nationalism.[82] In many parts of the Muslim world reformism and nationalism joined together to form a potent force; modernist's discourses persuaded Muslim masses to release themselves from colonial domination and political leaders legitimized this patriotism. The major themes of modernists inspired and complemented nationalist concerns: the preservation of Muslim identity in the face of the threat of political and cultural assimilation of Islam; the achievement of Muslim unity and solidarity to attain autonomy and independence.[83]

Arab modernists highlighted the Islamic symbols as Qur'ān and Holy Prophet were from Arab and raised the slogan of Arab nationalism: though the framework of Arab nationalism was organized by Christian intellectuals of Syria.[84] The spirit of nationalism changed the mode of the thinking of Arabs and Muslims. [85] In economic arena, modernists raised voices for social justice and freedom which were obviously hard to distinguish from the Western liberal principles. Many eminent Muslim scholars [86] were convinced that Islamic economic system is inherently socialistic due to its inherent qualities of social justice. They contend that although the term socialism is not used in the Qur'ān, and even the leading jurists have not elaborated the complex theoretical frame work of socialism as it is understood today, but the laws and principles that modern socialism preaches could easily be operationalized in a Muslim society without in any way injuring any of the fundamental rules of the Qur'ānic ideology. They sought out the grounds from the following *Hadith*,

"all Muslims share in three things: water, fodder and fire."[87]

On the basis of such texts, Sheikh Shaltut, the Sheikh of Al- Azhar, justified Nasser's socialism and agrarian reforms. Another kind of modernism was manifested in Ali Shariati' who interpreted *Shi'i* populism with Western roots in writers such as Sartre, Marx, Durkheim and Fanon. [88]

Emergence of Political Islam – Rise of Extremist Groups:

The implications of modernist discourses were far reaching in Muslim societies as it led to the secularization of minds and societies as well. The ultimate repercussion of this secularization was the emergence of "extremist", "fundamentalist" and revivalist groups who revolted against this westernization and preached return to the basics of Islam. They created insurgency against the secular regimes and rulers of the Muslim world. For them, the only thing worth borrowing from the West is the supposedly "value-neutral" modern science and technology. Interestingly, they adopted the modern ways, means and slogans to oppose modernity. They condemned the West loudly but still borrowed from the modern

Western thought extensively, especially in relation to modern Islamic "political" theory.

They tried to Islamize modernity contrary to the modernists who struggled to modernize Islam. It would not be wrong to say that the impact of modernity has been so phenomenal in Muslim societies that even the groups who rose to challenge it were profoundly shaped by it. They were in one way the consequence of modernity and on the other way the antithesis of modernism.[89]

Conclusion:

Muslim modernists responded to Western modernity in a single dimension. They saw the West as the model that the Muslims must follow. Modernists' discourses were devoid of those red flags which could serve as warning signs to identify those Western categories and concepts that the Muslims must shun in order to maintain Islam's integrity. The modernists' uncritical acceptance of Western precepts seriously compromised the ability of modern Islamic thought to constructively engage with modernity. Modernist vision stakes the very survival of Islam upon uncritically accepting certain ideas, concepts, and methods from modern Western thought in order to make Islam compatible with modernity. The modernists advocate that Muslims require fresh analysis, use the scientific tools offered by the modern social sciences in order to critically study the shortcomings of modern Islam, and then use various modern methodologies to construct an interpretation of Islam compatible with modernity.[90]Although the modernists differ in methodologies but they are agreed, that these have to be imported from the West without any significant modifications. Even though modernists are very much concerned that a healthy Muslim society must maintain link with the religious ethos and tradition, but they also appear to be ignorant of the dynamics in the modern West that had led to the complete severance of this bond. The methodologies suggested by contemporary Muslims modernists in order to reinvigorate Islamic thoughts have themselves directly contributed to the marginalization of religion in modern Western society. Muslim modernists equated themselves with reformers and revivalists but their unconditional acceptance of modernity led them to conclude radically new conceptions of Islamic tradition. Their attempts at rescuing tradition redefined it and their attempts to return to pure Islam brought new understanding of Islam and what it meant to be a Muslim.

Here it would not be wrong to say that the whole reformist, modernist agenda was envisioned from the prism of modernity. Modernity impacted Muslim societies in diverse ways and this variety in impact leads one to draw a single conclusion, i.e., politics became pivotal in Muslim societies; the focal point of all modernist discourses, reform movements, revivalists and fundamentalists. Political activism highlighted the discourses of revivalists and nationalists, secularists and '*ulama*'. Every movement aroused in order to modernize Islam or Islamize modernity sought political grounds. Earlier modernist's apologetic rationalism, nationalism, secularism, feminism and even the movements emerged to oppose the forces of modernity made politics central to their agenda. The emergence of political Islam was the most important impact of modernity in Muslim societies.

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[2] Shaukat Ali, *Islam and the Challenges of Modernity: An Agenda for the Twenty First Century*, (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, Centre of Excellence, Quaid e Azam University, 2004), p.14

[3] Anthony Giddens, *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity*. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), p.94

[4] Marshal Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* 3 Vols (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1974), 3: 177. Marshal Hodgson has used this word for the Western People.

[5] Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History*, (Westminster, MD, USA: Random House Adult Trade Publishing Group, 2002), p.127

[6] William Wilson Hunter, *Indian Musalmans* [London: 1987], 184 cited in John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*(New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.217

[7] I have borrowed this term from Dr Basit Bilal Koshul. The 18th sura of the Qur'ān narrates the story of a group of young believers (known in the West as the *Seven Sleepers of Ephesus*), who find it impossible to maintain their monotheistic beliefs in the dominant culture of pagan Rome. The pressure on them to renounce their beliefs is so intense that their lives were threatened. Concerned about the integrity of their faith, the believers went into the mountains and hid in a cave. They took this action after having come to the conclusion that it would be impossible for them to reconcile their faith with the dominant culture. The narrative of *ashab al kahaf* provides appropriate symbolism to describe the response of traditional ulama to the onslaught of the West in the 18th and 19th centuries.

[8] *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* P.54

[9] Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi, *The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pak Sub Continent 610-1947* (The Hague, 1962), 35-65; J.M.S Baljon, *Religion and Thought of Shah Waliyullah of Delhi*:*1703-1762* (Leiden, Brill, 1986), p.23-87

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[11] S. Moinul Haq, *Islamic Thought and Movements in the Sub-Continent, 711-1947* (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society Publication, 1979), p.446-455

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[24] *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality? P.*55

[25] *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* P.55

[26] Jamal ud din Afghani's *The Refutation of Materialists* was a criticism on the adoption of "naturalist" ideology by Sir Sayyed Ahmed. (Nikkie R. Keddie, "The Truth about the Nechri Sect," in *An Islamic Response to Islamic Imperialism, p.*130-174

[27] Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1789-1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 109; Mazharuddin Siddiqui quotes the wordings of Sir Sayyed, "the fact is that India needs not merely a Steel or an Addison, but also, and primarily a Luther."; Mazharuddin Siddiqui, *Modern Reformist Thought in The Muslim World* (Islamabad: The Islamic Research Institute, 1982), 4; Asaf A. A. Fyzee, *A Modern Approach to Islam* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1963), p.180-183

[28] Richard C. Martin, *Defenders of Reason in Islam: Mu'tazilism from Medieval School to Modern Symbol,* p.120

[29] *The Muslims of British India*, p.98

[30] Dr. Basit Bilal Koshul, "Recounting the Milestones: An Appraisal of Islam's encounter with Modernity," Part II, *The Qur'ānic Horizons* (April-June 1999), p.71

[31] Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan, *Tafseer-ul-Qur'ān m'aa Tahrir fi usul al Tafseer* (Lahore: Dost Associates, 1994)

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[33] Basit Bilal Koshul, "Recounting the Milestones: An Appraisal of Islam's encounter with Modernity," Part II, 73; B. A. Dar, *Religious Thought of Sayyid Ahmad Khan,* p.221-226

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Malcolm H. Kerr, *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories in Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida*, p.130

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[45] Basit Bilal Koshul, "Recounting the Milestones: An Appraisal of Islam's Encounter with Modernity," II: p.74

[46] *Modern Trends in Islam*, p.95

[47] *Islam and the Plight of the Modern Man, p.*133

[48] Mansoor Moaddal, and Kamran Talattof, "Introduction, Contemporary Debates in Islam: Modernism Versus Fundamentalism," in *Contemporary Debates in Islam: An Anthology of modernist and Fundamentalist Thought*, eds. Mansoor Moaddal and Kamran Talattof, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), p.5

[49] Basit Bilal Koshul, "Recounting the Milestones: An Appraisal of Islam's encounter with Modernity," Part III, in *The Qur'ānic Horizons* (July-September 1999), p.43

[50] Sir Sayyed, Muhammad Abduh, Jamal ud din Afghani, Amir Ali, Muhammad Iqbal and all others strongly criticized the closing of doors of *ijtihad* and stressed to conduct ijtihad independently.

[51] Ijtihad is a term, means the attempt to formulate a legal opinion regarding a situation for which there is no explicit injunction in the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* derived from this tradition of the Prophet Muhammad SAW:

The prophet Muhammad appointed Mu'ad ibn Jabal to be a Governor of Yemen. Before dispatching him to his destination, the Prophet SAW questioned Mu'adh regarding the source of his legal judgment. Mu'adh told the Prophet SAW that he would turn to Qur'ānic dictates to decide legal matters. If he did not find an explicit ruling on the matter in the Qur'ān he would refer to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. If he failed to find an explicit ruling there also, then he would exercise his own mental effort—he would do *ijtihad*. The Prophet approved his hierarchy of sources by stating that "What the messenger of Allah's Messenger has spoken has pleased the Messenger of Allah. (Abu Dawood Sulaiman b Ash'as, *Sunan abi Dawood, Kitab ul Aqdhiya,* Chap*:"*Ijtihad al Raaye fil Qada"[Riyadh: Dar-us-Salam li Nashar wa Tauzi ', 1999], *Hadith* num: 3596)

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